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ABSTRACT

Rural youth have been active in the development of the German Democratic Republic's agricultural production program. Although those who reside in rural areas and commute to work in urban areas are also classified as "rural youth," the core of rural youth are those who work in agricultural primary production. Of the 778,639 permanent working people, 86,950 young people (11.2% of the working population) were employed in agricultural enterprises in 1978. From 1971 to 1978, the number of apprentices for agriculture, forestry, and foodstuffs economy has increased from 9.7% to 11.7% of all available pupils. Presently, about 60,000 apprentices are undergoing a 2-year training and about 5,000 are taking a 3-year training with Abitur ("A" level). There have been large increases in skilled workers in crop farming and stock breeding. The quality and quantity of vocational training and professional training have improved since 1971. Training curricula have been reorganized, the major occupations and their underlying preconceptions have been revised and clarified, and the concentration of training sites has advanced through the building of new enterprise vocational schools and respective hostels for apprentices. Political organization of co-operative farmers has also become the characteristic feature of the socialist mode of life. (CM)

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On the Development of Rural Youth in the GDR

The revolutionary changes that were taking place in the country during the thirty years of GDR history are a proof of the creative application of Lenin's co-operative plan to our agriculture. Today, we have an efficient socialist agriculture that uses more and more industrialized production methods and improves the socialist relations of production. The aim of our socialist agricultural policy is "to systematically increase the production and its efficiency in agriculture and foodstuffs economy in order to ensure a stable and continuously improving supply of high-quality food to the population and of raw material to industry" and "further approach the living conditions in the village to those in thwn to gradually overcome the fundamental differences between town and country".[1] We have gone ahead in the sense of this challenge. When in 1960 the merging of all farmers into co-operatives was completed we were able - the calculations being based on the former, much lower per capita consumption - to satisfy the consumers' need for slaughter cattle to 90 per cent only, for milk and dairy products to 76 per cent and that one for butter to 80 per cent by means of out domestic production. Since 1973 we have met the ever increasing need for basic food, except for cereals and certain types of fruit and vegetable, by means of our own production, and in addition to that exported a considerable amount. In the period from 1949 to 1978, the production of crop farming has been doubled. The production of slaughter cattle was increased 9.5fold that of milk 5.5fold and off eggs 22fold. This has been possible while the number of working people was in comparison with 1950 reduced to about 38 per cent with the qualification level, how-

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ever, being enormously raised.
85 per cent of the working people - in 1960: 4.6 per cent! - have completed a vocational training today. This correspondes to the level of workers in socialist industry.

Further intensifying our agricultural production is an objective requirement of the growing and stable foodstuffs production. It requires to master chemization, mechanization, melioration, technical drying, and breeding and cultivation or farming in inseparable relation with the vocational training and further professional training of all working people, in particular of youth. "This is the only way to increase up to 1980 the gross output of crop farming to 4.6 to 4.8 tons of cereal units per hectare of land in cultivation, and to improve the stock breeding output by about 9 per cent."[2]
It goes without saying that this faces especially young people in agriculture with great demands.

Our youth in the country has taken an active part in this successful way of our agriculture during each stage of our social development. The socioeconomic structure in our country, which is based on socialist relations of production, is the most vital living condition of our rural youth today. This basic condition is characterized by good working conditions and reasonable living conditions in the country. It guarantees young people safe and secure social prospects. Preceding from such a stable social position, the majority of our young people really stand their test in the process of production intensification and industrialization and the continued development of co-operative relations. It is in the first place a task for young people to "transform" agriculture into a branch of production that rests on science and technical achievements".[3]

Refering to rural youth in contrast to urban youth usually means young people who live in the country and work in agriculture. They have grown up in the villages, have gone to school there, are due to familiy traditions and many social ties closely related with country life, and the main part of them works in an agricultural job, too. These young co-operative farmers, workers, and members of intelligentsia, the same who have an active share in the social development within the communities, form the core of rural youth. But one should note that - resulting from intensifying our agricultural production - due to the urbanization process objectively affecting all industrialized countries, the differences between town and country become smaller and that a great part of young people living in the country, aged 16 to 25, have completed their vocational training in industry in a town and work there as one part of working class youth. About 200,000, that is to say a great many more than young people in agriculture, commute between their residence in the country and their work place in town each working day, have become commuters. But they spend their leisure time mainly in the country, generally, their mode of life is strongly influenced by rural ways of living. Working in town/industry where many experiences of life are made reacts on the other hand upon the process of forming the socialist mode of life in the villages. These young commuters, whose modes and habits of living are influenced by town and village, play a significant role in the country and should be understood as a special youth-specific political task, if youth is differentially looked upon. We believe that it is justified to characterize these young people as a subgroup of rural youth, if similarly to the notion of rural

population the aspect of settledness in a certain territory underlies the contents of this term. Here, we follow BOROVIK/ MARSCHAK who call rural youth a sociodemographical group of the rural population.[4]

The discussion about this problem is certainly not yet finished. But we think that the classification into rural youth is especially reasonable and justified for the group of commuters who do not intend to move into town, who are inclined to maintain their relations with rural life besides their work in town. In addition, this classification into rural population of rural youth also applies, as is well known, to young people undergoing a vocational training, to pupils, apprentices, and students, who are subject to commuting since the centres of training have been centralized. We will come back to the commuters in our discussion, but next we shall turn to youth who work in our agricultural enterprises. They are the core of rural youth, of the strictly speaking rural youth. In the dictionary about socialist youth policy (Woerterbuch zur sozialistischen Jugendpolitik) it is defined to be "the part of GDR-youth" who is immediately or mediately connected with agricultural production.[5] POSTLER gave a more detailed definition of this part of rural youth: "Belonging to the youth of socialist agriculture are mainly those young people who work in the agricultural primary production, such as agricultural production co-operatives (LPG), horticultural co-operatives (GPG) and nationally-owned farms (VEG), but also young people employed in the other enterprises, who work in the field of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Foodstuffs Economy and are closely connected with agricultural production, i. e., those young people who are employed in forestry, in the district enterprises for agricultural machines

and plants, the Farmer's Trading Organization (BHG), the nationally-owned land improvement enterprise VEB Meliorationsbau, and the land improvement co-operatives, the factory farming combines (KIM), at the institutes of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences, in the production co-operative of fisher-men, the institutions of veterinary medicine."[6] Under consideration of the development in the 70s, young people of the agrarian-industry associations (AIV), the agrochemical centres (ACZ), the inter-enterprise and inter-co-operative institutions (ZBE and ZGE) in the stock breeding branch must be added to complete the survey about the agricultural fields of production. These young people in agricultural production are the generation rising from the class of co-operative farmers and the working class in agriculture and will take an active part in defining and developing the approaching between these two classes, which is the fundamental social process taking place as classes and strata in socialism develop.

In the following we want to characterize the position of rural youth in the GDR.

1.Of the 778,639 permanent working people 86,950 young people were employed in our agricultural enterprises in 1978. The percentage of youth in the total number of working people is 11.2 per cent, thus agriculture has reached the third rank among the branches of production, following industry (16 per cent) and the cultural and social institutions (13.5 per cent).

Generally, obsolescence in agricultural occupations has been overcome. In the agricultural production co-operatives (LPG) the number of youth has exceeded the number of pensioners since 1977. The reproduction quota develop as follows:

1971	1.6 per cent
1973	1.7 per cent
1975	2.1 per cent
1977	2.3 per cent
1978	2.3 per cent

From 1971 to 1978 the number of apprentices for agriculture, forestry and foodstuffs economy has been increased from 9.7 per cent to 11.7 per cent of all pupils available for national economy. The apprentice quota was on the whole increased by 14 per cent during these years. Thus, about 60,000 apprentices are undergoing a 2-year training, about 5,000 of them a 3-year training with Abitur ("A" level) at present. In the field of agriculture, the number of apprentices entering the major occupations of skilled worker in crop farming (Agrotechniker/Mechanisator), skilled worker in stock breeding (Zootechniker/Mechanisator), skilled worker in cow-and-pig breeding, skilled worker in fertilizers and crop spraying (Agrochemiker), and gardener was raised by 160 per cent. Taking those occupations of a skilled worker in crop farming/stock breeding that are significant for the intensification of production into account, the increase in the number of skilled workers in crop farming was 356 per cent and of skilled workers in stock breeding 550 per cent. This development was accompanied by a fundamental reorganisation of the training curricula and underlying preconceptions which have made an agricultural occupation more attractive to young people so that even school-leavers from town choose one of these occupations today. Quality and quantity of vocational training have grown up since 1971 and reached a level that corresponds to the amount of tasks agriculture is faced with. This generally positive overall state of offspring development need not deceive about the fact that there still remain special problems to be

solved. There are enormous differences between each district and each enterprise so that the number of young people may be 5 per cent in one co-operative and 30 per cent in the adjacent LPG. Usually, they are to be traced back to a good or insufficient managerial work in relation to the winning, engaging, and promoting of offspring and can therefore be compensated in a positive sense, if they are considered to be a focus of managerial work. Further, it is especially important to ensure that the apprentice quota planned for crop farming occupations, in particular for skilled workers in crop farming, will be fulfilled. In this branch of production that is decisive for the overall development of agricultural production respective measures should be taken to improve occupation advertising (Berufswerbung) as well as the ties of young people to their profession and to the country so that there will not occur any intents of fluctuation at all.

2. In relation with the national economic tasks, agriculture is faced with, quantity and quality of vocational training and further professional training have considerably improved since 1971. Training curricula have been reorganized, the major occupations and their underlying preconceptions have been revised, clarified, and the concentration of training sites has been carried on through the building of new enterprise vocational schools and respective hostels for apprentices. The attractive power of the agricultural occupations has grown due to these measures. The education and qualification structure has undergone a considerable development and reached - disregarding the contribution of university and technical school and college - the state of development in industry. Of the 86,950 working young people

66,019 = 76 % had completed skilled workers' training

2,865 = 3 % had graduated from a technical school or college

1,007 = 1 % had graduated from university

810 = 1 % had completed foreman training (Meisterausbildung)

5,873 = 7 % had completed a partial skilled workers' training (Teilberufsausbildung)

10,376 = 12 % had not completed training in 1978.

When we look at the last two figures it becomes evident - besides the reached success - what efforts are still to be made for qualification. The general education level of school-leavers beginning vocational training has considerably raised since 1971. The number of pupils having left school after the 10th form was 85.6 per cent in the major agricultural occupations. During the last years there has simultanuously been a continuous decrease in the number of pupils having left school at a lower form, its average of the last years is about 10 per cent. This high education potential has in particular had access into the major agricultural occupations and guarantees that we can triple the demand for university and college graduates in the next 15 years.[7]

3. In relation with the radical historical process of political and economical changes in the country, the level of political organization (politische Organisiertheit) of the class of co-operative farmers has - in the process marked by the approaching of both fundamental classes existing in socialist society - more and more become the characteristic feature of the socialist mode of life. This is convincingly pointed to by SEBASTIAN after the work of the research group "The mode of life in the country" ("Lebensweise auf dem Lande") attached to the Wilhelm-

Pieck-Universität Rostock, which lasted several years, and he characterizes further how the rural youth themselves accelerate and promote this process.[8] As the number of young people in agriculture and their general and professional education have gone up, young people's vocational and social activities taking place under working and living conditions that are being improved by means of our agricultural policy have developed year after year.

1 Programm der SED, Berlin 1976, S. 30

2 G. Grünberg, Der Leninsche Genossenschaftsplan

3 W. I. Lenin, Rede auf dem I. Gesamtrussischen Kongreß der Landabteilungen des Komitees der Dorfarmut und der Kommunen, Werke, Bd. 28, Dietz Verlag Berlin 1959, S. 347

4 V. B. Borovik/A. L. Marschak, Jugend und Kultur auf dem Lande, Moskau 1978, Arbeitsübersetzung ZIJ Ü 807, S. 9

5 Wörterbuch zur sozialistischen Jugendpolitik, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1975, S. 163

6 E. Postler, Jugend in der sozialistischen Landwirtschaft, in: Einheit 4/1972, S. 506

7 G. Grünberg, Der IX. Parteitag über die Aufgaben der Land- und Nahrungsgüterwirtschaft sowie die weitere gesellschaftliche Entwicklung auf dem Lande, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1976, S. 46

8 Bericht über eine wissenschaftliche Beratung zu Problemen der politischen Organisiertheit der Klasse der Genossenschaftsbauern, in: Informationen zur soziologischen Forschung in der DDR 6/1977, S. 4 bis 14